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THE INDIAN CHIEF SHABBONA

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1915

Published by Mrs. L. A. Hatch, DeKalb, Illinois.

E99
TP8-36

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1915

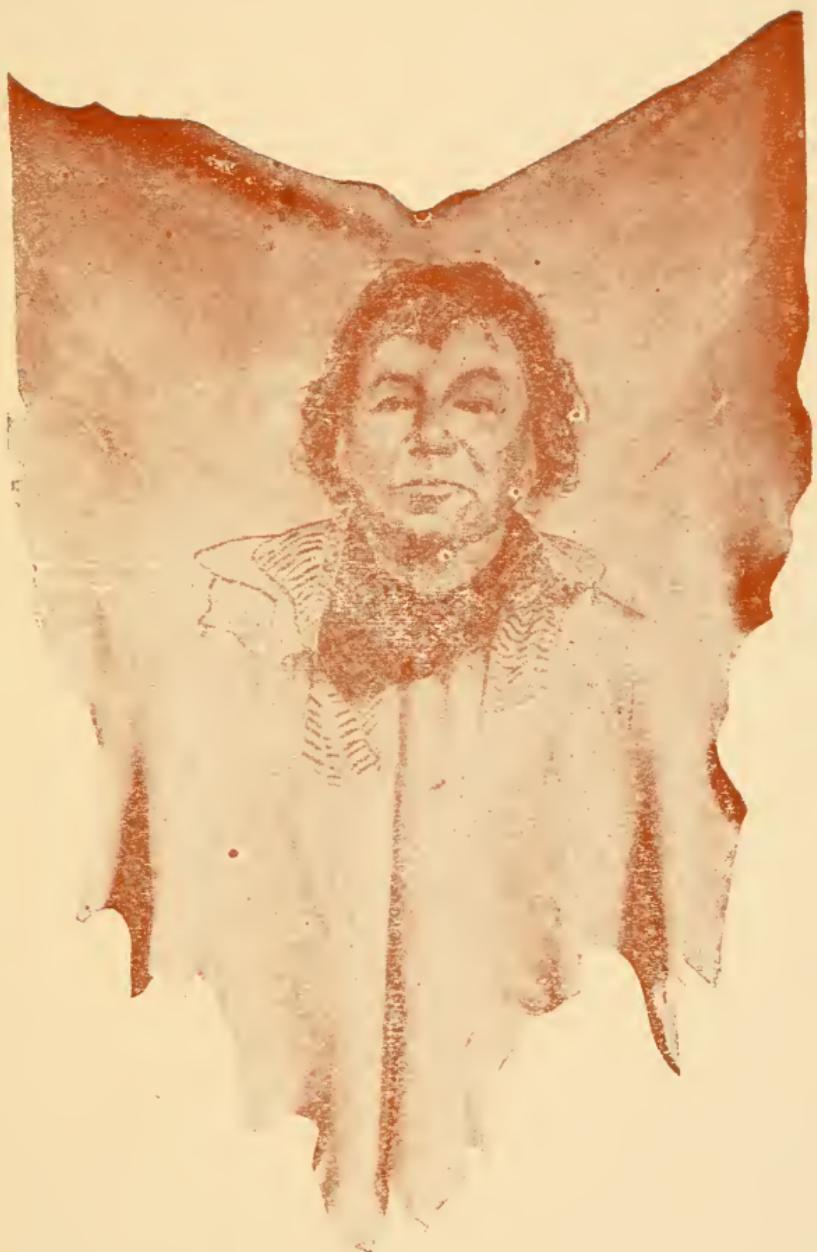
\$0.¹⁵

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PRINTED IN THE MANUAL ARTS PRINT SHOP
NORTHERN ILLINOIS STATE NORMAL SCHOOL

SEP -9 1915

No 1.



THE INDIAN CHIEF SHABBONA

THE Indians have gone from Illinois, but there are many people living today who remember having seen the last of this dusky race as it disappeared. With them have gone, never to return, many of the primitive conditions that once existed. It is with difficulty that the present generation reconstructs in image form and scenes and conditions that met those who first came to this land as explorers or founders of homes. Fortunately we have with us a few of the early pioneers from whose lips we may gather a few of the fragments of our early history. These should be collected and retained as a part of our national heritage. It will give us strength to look back upon those early days and to recount the struggles through which we have come.

The conflicts which took place between

the red man and the early white settlers would make a long story were all told. Were we to write this story the name of Shabbona would appear in many places. Were you to read it you would come to love the man and to respect him for the true manhood that he displayed on so many occasions. Were you to go to the early settlers who knew Shabbona you would find them all agreed as to the nobility of his character. He was known by them all as "The Friend of the White Man." The writer will tell the story as he gathered it from those who knew him, and from other sources that will be indicated at the close of this article.

SHABBONA GROVE--HOME OF CHIEF

In the southern part of DeKalb County in Illinois is found a small village that has been named after Shabbona. Not far from this village is to be found a grove known as Shabbona Grove. It was at this grove that Shabbona and his people made their home for many years. Those who live at the grove take pleasure in pointing out the spot where he pitched his wigwam. It was a beautiful place in those early days nestled on the banks of a little stream. It was a small clearing in the wood well protected from the storms that raged during the winter.

In the early years of his stay at this grove it was the home of his whole tribe, which by the way never numbered more than one hundred thirty souls. After the government moved the Indians from Illinois, Shabbona and his family lived here for a number of years. A hollow in the ground marks the place where he had a shallow well from which he obtained water. A few mounds mark the resting place of a number of his family.

You are told that a house was built for the old chief by the white settlers who thought they would show their appreciation for him in this way. This house was made of logs. He never lived in it, so some who knew him say, but instead used it as a shelter for his ponies and a storehouse for his provisions. At times some of the younger Indians of the tribe used this cabin as a place of shelter but old Shabbona and Coconoko, his wife, always preferred to live in the tent even during the coldest weather in winter. As he visited his white friends it was almost impossible to get him to sleep over night in a house. He preferred to roll up in his blanket and sleep out of doors. By his association with the whites he acquired much from them but there were many Indian traits and customs that he retained as long as he lived.

At one time the grove at which he made his home was one of the finest in the state of Illinois. It covered an area of 1,500 acres. In it were found large white, bur, and red oak. No better black walnut trees were to be found anywhere than were found here. Outside of this grove extended great tracts of prairie land noted for their fertility.

Surrounded by this, Shabbona, the Indian chief, lived and ruled his little kingdom. Plenty surrounded him on all sides. He and his people visited other Indian settlements, of which there were many in northern Illinois. Other chiefs and their people visited him and lived off his substance. His word had much weight in the councils with other chiefs. He was one of the great chiefs among the chiefs.

WHO WAS SHABBONA ?

But you ask, Who was this Shabbona? He was a member of the Ottawa tribe of Indians, born as the best authorities think, in Ohio somewhere on the Maumee River. He was the grand nephew of the great Indian chief, Pontiac. He lived at the time of Tecumseh and the Prophet. He knew them both and took several long journeys with the former. For a time he was a friend of Black-hawk. He knew Keokuk, Big Foot, Sauganash, Black Partridge, Snachwine, Wabansee, and

Red Jacket. He probably knew Big Thunder. Spotka, the Pottawattomie chief, appreciated his worth, and as an indication of his appreciation gave his daughter in marriage.

The name of this chief was not always spelled by writers in the same way. The following spellings are found: Shabbona, Chamblee, Shaubene, Shabone, Shaubenay and Shabehney. Shabbona seems to be the spelling preferred. The old chief liked to have his name pronounced as if there were but two syllables to it, and to pronounce it as if it were spelled Shab ney, with the accent on the first syllable.

In appearance he was a very striking character. He would be singled out from among a body of Indians because of the native dignity of the man. He was five feet, nine inches in height, broad shouldered, with a large head supported by a heavy neck. His hands, for a man of his size, were small. His body was long so that when he rode on horseback he appeared larger than when on foot. He was a well built man. When a young man he excelled in all kinds of athletic exercises. As a boy he was the picture of health. He was always large for his age. When a young man he weighed two hundred pounds and before his death he weighed two hundred forty pounds. As has been

intimated he was very muscular and capable of great endurance. Until his last illness, which occurred in his eighty-fourth year, he did not know what it was to be sick. One in speaking of him says, "He was as strong as a buffalo, as swift of foot as a deer and as gentle as a woman." There are those who think that Shabbona, with his power to understand men, his soundness of judgement in dealing with matters that pertained to his race, his coolness in times of danger, his loyalty to principles, might have become one of the great men of the world had he had opportunities of education. He possessed those characteristics that made him a leader. People loved him, they believed in him, they acted upon his suggestions.

HIS FIRST VISIT TO ILLINOIS AND HIS MARRIAGE

In the autumn, it was the custom of the Indians to go on extended hunts in order that food might be secured and prepared for the winter. At this time of the year game was in good condition and the fur of fur-bearing animals was at its best. Sometimes these hunts took the hunters a long distance from their homes. The Indians of certain tribes came to feel that they owned certain hunting grounds and looked upon others who

might hunt upon these grounds as hostile to their interests.

In the autumn of 1800, a party of Ottawa hunters from the country around Lake Erie went on a hunting expedition into what is now known as Illinois. This hunt led them around the lower end of Lake Michigan to the present site of Chicago. Here they felt at home as they were among their friends, the Pottawattomies. Among those who went on this hunt was a young man known as Shabbona--the Shabbona about whom this article tells. This was his first visit to Illinois. When the hunt was over the Indians returned to their homes in the Ohio country. Shabbona, however, did not return, but spent the winter at the home of Spotka, the chief of the Pottawattomies at Chicago. As has been stated his stay with this chief resulted in Shabbona's receiving Spotka's daughter in marriage. Shabbona was already a chief among the Ottawas and this marriage to the daughter of a Pottawattomie chief made him a Pottawattomie, and later he became a Pottawattomie chief.

By his sterling qualities he won the respect of his new brothers and as has been indicated became a chief among them. It is said that at first they were inclined to feel somewhat jealous of Shabbona and as a

result said some things of him that were not altogether good. Some of these remarks came to the ears of Shabbona. It made him feel sad to hear these things for he had tried his best to please those with whom he lived. After thinking matters over for a time he decided that he could stand it no longer, so one morning he arose and announced to his squaw, Coconoko, that he was going to go back to his people to live among them. Bidding Coconoko good-bye he mounted his pony and rode away to the eastward. He rode and thought and the farther he got away from his squaw the more he thought. Before night overtook him he turned his pony about and returned to Coconoko to live with her during the remainder of his life which closed fifty-nine years after this. While he was gone Coconoko talked to her people about the injustice that had been done Shabbona. After this there was never any more trouble along this line for they soon came to appreciate his worth.

It was not long after this that Shabbona selected Shabbona Grove as his home.

From 1800 to 1807 Shabbona traveled much among the Indians along the Illinois, Fox, and Rock Rivers. At times he went farther to the south, also up the Mississippi, and into Wisconsin. The missionaries among the Indians often secured

him to guide them as they went from tribe to tribe. In this way he became very well acquainted with the leading chiefs and with the country in which they lived. It is said that he could mark out a trail or river course in the sand, indicating all of the landmarks, so that it was easy for a stranger not acquainted with the country to find his way. This knowledge of the country and acquaintance with the chiefs was a good preparation for the later life that Shabbona led.

SHABBONA MEETS TECUMSEH

In the year 1807, Shabbona had the good fortune, if looked at in one way, and bad fortune if looked at in another light, to become acquainted with Tecumseh—Flying Panther—the chief of the Shawnee Indians, who was a man of many high qualities, impressive manners, and wonderful natural eloquence. Tecumseh was a little older than Shabbona but they were both comparatively young men at this time, neither being over thirty-five years of age. The two chiefs had many councils together. Tecumseh saw the evil influence of whisky among his people so he prohibited its use. This and other things he did left their impress upon Shabbona for good, although in later years he imbibed somewhat.

In the year 1810, General Harrison met Tecumseh on the Wabash in council. After this council Tecumseh went to Shabbona's village and persuaded Shabbona to go with him to see the Indians of northern Illinois and Wisconsin to get them to join in concerted action in driving back the whites who were pushing their settlements forward into their hunting ground. These two chiefs went from village to village along the Illinois and Fox Rivers. Then they went to the Winnebago and Menominee Indians to the north. Both of these tribes fought against the Americans during the War of 1812. Tecumseh and Shabbona then moved to the south along the Mississippi, visiting the Sauks and Foxes, meeting Black Hawk and Wapello the leading chiefs. At Rock Island the two chiefs parted, Tecumseh going farther to the south along the Mississippi and Shabbona returning to his home in DeKalb County.

In the summer of 1811 Tecumseh and Shabbona met General Harrison again at Vincennes in a second council. After a wordy conference Tecumseh withdrew and with Shabbona and two Shawnee chiefs set out for the south to visit the Creeks, Cherokees, Choctaws and Seminoles. While absent his followers were defeated on the seventh of November, 1811, in the battle of Tippecanoe by General Harrison.

MASSACRE AT FORT DEARBORN

After the visit to the south Shabbona returned again to the grove. It was while here that he heard of the declaration of war with England. There was a plan on foot to attack and capture if possible, Fort Dearborn before news could reach that place. Runners came to Shabbona telling him that the attack was to be made and that the Pottawatomies were all to take part in the war. He decided that he would not go to the attack on Fort Dearborn as he had many friends there among the whites. Seeing the other Indians going he mounted his pony and went also. Snachwine had planned and carried out the attack. When Shabbona arrived he was shocked to see what had been done. Scattered along the beach of the lake lay the forty-two (some say fifty-two) bodies of the victims of the massacre, scalped and mutilated, women, children and soldiers alike. The body of Captain Wells lay in one place, his head in another while his arms and legs were scattered over the prairie. The remains of Captain Wells were gathered up by Black Partridge and buried near where they were found, while the bodies of the other victims were left where they fell until the rebuilding of Fort Dearborn in 1816-- four years

later. Then their scattered bones that had been bleaching in the sun were gathered up and buried by Captain Bradley.

The prisoners were placed in Kinzie's house where Black Partridge and Shabbona tried to protect them with their braves. Parties of Shawnee Indians arrived from the Wabash. These were thirsting for blood. They expected to arrive in time to take part in the attack. They rushed by Black Partridge and Shabbona to get at the prisoners and had not Saguanash arrived just as he did their lives would have been taken. They would have shared the fate of the others. As it was they were saved and we feel grateful for the share that Shabbona had in the saving of their lives. They were made prisoners. Part of them were taken to St. Joseph and to Canada. Others were scattered among the different tribes of Pottawatomies but in time they were sent to Detroit and ransomed.

TECUMSEH'S DEATH AND SHABBONA'S VOW

After the massacre of Fort Dearborn Shabbona returned to his grove with his mind made up to take no further part in the War. In the fall of 1812 emissaries from Tecumseh reached Shabbona's village bearing presents and the wampum belt ask-

ing him and his braves to join with him in the war. Shabbona was deceived into believing that the Pottawatomies and many other tribes in Illinois were going to take up the hatchet and join the English in their war against the Americans. So Shabbona gave up the winter hunt he had planned to take and with twenty-two of his warriors left for the seat of the war. On his way to the Wabash where the Shawnees dwelt he fell in with Black Hawk and the Indians under his command. The Hawk and Shabbona had been friends for many years and had sat together many times in council. In this war Shabbona stood next in command to Tecumseh. At Fort Meigs and Fort Stephenson the Indians were badly whipped by the Americans. This discouraged Black Hawk and his warriors so he, with them, returned to his home on the Mississippi. Shabbona, however, remained with Tecumseh and pushed onward, through Indiana and Ohio into Canada. In September, 1813, the battle of the Thames was fought and at this battle Shabbona saw his friend Tecumseh killed by Col. Richard M. Johnson. Shabbona being second in command, the leadership fell upon him. The battle raged with fury and there seemed to be no chance for the Indians so he ordered his braves to retreat, which they did. Shabbona never

expected to escape from the conflict alive. It is said that he prayed to the Great Spirit that if his life was saved he would never take up arms again against the whites. It was saved and from this time till his death he kept his vow. For this stand he lost prestige among the Indians. In derision they called him, "Friend of the White Man."

The people of northern Illinois remember Shabbona not for the part that he took in the war of 1812 but for what he did after the war. Until 1849 the grove in DeKalb County was his home. True he came and went but this was where he lived with his family and where those of his family who had died were buried. The white settlers did not come to Illinois in very large numbers, until after the Indians were moved west of the Mississippi, after the Black Hawk War. When Chicago was laid out as a town in 1830 there were twelve families besides the garrison. Three years later the population had increased to 550. After the War of 1812 Shabbona was always ready to protect the settlers in and about Chicago.

In the fall of 1823 Fort Dearborn was vacated and troops did not occupy it again until the fall of 1828. During this time the citizens of Chicago were unprotected except by the friendly Indians. All went well until the Winnebagoes took up the hatchet

against the whites in 1827. At the time Shabbona went to almost every village of the Pottawattomies and persuaded them to remain at home, and not take part in the war. He told the citizens of Chicago that he would station his braves there and defend them if they wished him to do so.

VISITS BIG FOOT AND SAVES CHICAGO

The people of Chicago requested Shabbona and Saguanash to visit the village on Big Foot Lake [Lake Geneva], and try to persuade Big Foot to not go to war with the whites. The two rode to the village on horse back. Saguanash did not enter the village but took a position so that he could see Shabbona as he met Big Foot and his braves. The meeting was not of a friendly nature. Shabbona was accused of being a friend of the whites and an enemy of the Indians. Shabbona tried to convince Big Foot that the war with the whites meant the destruction of the Indians. The warriors collected around the chiefs as they carried on their conversation. Big Foot became enraged and took out his tomahawk and was about to kill Shabbona but was prevented from doing so by the warriors who were standing about. The warriors took away Shabbona's rifle, tomahawk, knife and blanket and bound him with

buckstring thongs, after which he was led to an unoccupied tent and placed under the guard of two warriors.

Saguanash saw all this from his hiding place on the bluff that overlooked the village. When it looked as if the fate of Shabbona was sealed he mounted his pony and rode to Chicago to tell the story of what he had witnessed. During the night the Winnebagoes held a council and it was decided that it was not safe to retain Shabbona as a prisoner so he was released and allowed to return to Fort Dearborn. This was against the wish of Big Foot. He released him but secretly set out on his trail with a few of his warriors determined to kill him if possible. Shabbona suspected something of the sort and urged his fleet pony forward and made his escape. Big Foot followed him for many miles but finally gave up the pursuit. This visit of Shabbona to the village of the Winnebagoes resulted in their remaining at home and Chicago was again safe.

For several years preceding 1832, the Indians of northern Illinois had been comparatively quiet as far as outward signs were concerned, but there was a spirit of discontent prevalent among the Sauks and Foxes. They could not get over feeling that the whites were aggressors and that slowly but surely they were losing their land and being

driven into the West where they would have to encounter new enemies in new fields. This was not altogether to their liking.

While the Indians wandered about from place to place, they, for the most part, had a home other than their wigwams. They disliked to leave the place where they were born, especially if there was a good prospect of their never seeing it again. Oftentimes there centered about such a locality a history and a body of traditions that tended to make it well nigh sacred to them. To be driven from the place where their dead, for generations had been buried, engendered a just hatred for the whites that has not been easily blotted from their memories.

In Illinois, as elsewhere, the Indians and whites have not mixed. They are too unlike in their modes of livelihood and in disposition to dwell in peace together. Where the whites settled the Indians gradually disappeared. For the most part they recognized the superiority of their aggressors. Occasionally we find a character like Shabbona, who, in a measure, took on the ways of the whites and remained among them, to watch with interest, the changes that followed their coming.

BLACK HAWK WAR AND SHABBONA'S WARNING

In 1832 Black Hawk and the Prophet made a desperate effort to induce the Pottawattamies and Ottawas to join with the Sauks and Foxes in a war against the whites. It was February of 1832 that a great council of the Sauxs, Foxes, Winnebagoes and Pottawattamies was held at Indian Town. Many chiefs were present, among them Shabbona, who at this time was fifty-seven years of age. The council lasted for many days and nights. Eloquent appeals were made by Black Hawk to induce the other tribes to unite in a final attempt to drive the white man from the frontier. It was evident that if such an attempt were not made in a short time the whites would become so numerous that all hopes to drive them back would be fruitless. All of the Pottawattamies, but one tribe, joined Shabbona in opposing the union of the tribes and the council finally broke up without effecting a union.

At this time Black Partridge and Snachwine, the peace chiefs, were dead and Shabbona stood next in power among the Pottawatomie chiefs. Ever since Shabbona had seen his friend Tecumseh fall in battle at the Thames, he had been a missionary for

peace among the Indians. He had become thoroughly convinced that it was useless for the Indian to take up arms against the whites.

When Black Hawk saw that he could not get the tribes to join, he went back to his watch tower at the mouth of Rock River determined on war at any cost. He then went across the Mississippi into Iowa. Here he remained until April, 1832, when he again crossed into Illinois and moved up the Rock River valley with his warriors. He moved on until he came to a point about twenty-five miles above Dixon Ferry and from there he went east to a grove of timber which has since been known as Stillman's Run.

At this point Black Hawk did not meet the warriors he had expected to meet, so he sent for Shabbona. He went as did others to meet in council with Black Hawk for the last time. It was here that the last war dance took place. Black Hawk tried hard to get Shabbona to join with him for he knew that if he secured Shabbona, practically the whole of the Pottawattamies would be in favor of the union and would take part in the war. Many of the Pottawattamies were doubtless waiting for a chance to kill off some of their white enemies. A war would furnish such a chance. Shabbona

was convinced that Black Hawk was determined upon war and could not be turned from his purpose. The Hawk said, "If we unite our forces we will have an army like the trees of the forest and will drive the palefaces before us like autumn leaves before an angry wind." Shabbona replied, "The army of the palefaces will be like the leaves on the trees and will sweep you into the ocean beyond the setting sun."

Then we have the story of how he stole away from the council in the night, with his son and nephew, to warn the whites of their imminent danger. In doing this he took his life in his hand, for to fall across the path of Black Hawk meant death, for he had refused to join with him in war and had gone over to give assistance in every way to the enemy.

This meant that Shabbona had lost caste with many of the Indian tribes. He could never again meet with them in council. He must be alert lest he be taken by his enemy, for he was looked upon as a traitor by the Hawk and his people. He must look for protection from the whites.

It was a perilous undertaking to warn the settlers but in it lay their only safety. Shabbona's son and nephew warned the settlers along the Fox River and at Holderman's Grove. The settlers were warned as

far east as the DuPage River in DuPage County. The whites were urged to go to Ottawa and to Fort Dearborn as soon as possible so as to escape the fury of Black Hawk, which was sure to break upon them. This advice they followed. Shabbona warned the settlers of Bureau County and those along Indian Creek. Some of the settlers went to Hennepin, some went to Peoria and others went to Springfield. Shabbona was in his saddle 48 hours. He rode his pony to death, took off the saddle, borrowed another pony of a settler and went on his mission. In his broken English he told the settlers to go. In some cases he rode back to warn them a second time and even begged them to make haste to leave. Often-times in the past the settlers had been warned of impending Indian hostilities, to find, after fleeing to the nearest fort, that the alarm was without foundation. A number were inclined to look upon Shabbona's warning as a false alarm. As a result many had barely time to escape Black Hawk and his warriors. At Indian Creek no attention was given to his warning. The Indians found the people of the settlement at work in their fields and about their homes and in a short time thirteen were killed and two girls were taken prisoners.

Shabbona had sent his people to the

east into Indiana to get them away from the reach of Black Hawk. After the war they returned to the grove in DeKalb County.

You are familiar with the story of Black Hawk after this, his attempt to escape to the north and his capture by the troops who were guided in their search by Shabbona. With his capture and the removal of the Indians to reservations west of the Mississippi River the terror of Indian massacres in Illinois came to an end. There soon poured into this rich prairie state a host of pioneers to lay under subjection the resources of the wilderness in the building of their homes.

It must have been a picturesque gathering in 1835, as Pottawattamies to the number of 5,000 assembled for the last time at Chicago. They had come decked with all their most showy ornaments, to draw their pay from the government. Pathetic indeed was it to see them in their last dance, displaying as they did, all the savagery of savages. On that August day the people of Chicago saw the last of a race as it took its departure, worsted in the struggle for existence, baffled at every point, and made to retire before the progress of the white man.

To us the story of the red man in Illinois seems a long way in the past but there are

men living today who witnessed his departure.

GOV'T RESERVATION FOR SHABBONA

We will now turn our attention to the reservation that Shabbona and his people owned for a time. In a treaty made at Prairie Du Chien in 1829, the Pottawattamie Indians ceded their land in northern Illinois to the United States. At this time two sections were reserved as a home for Shabbona and his family. This tract of land included Section 23, and the west half of Section 25, and the east half of Section 26, in town 38, range 3, east of the Third Principal Meridian at Paw Paw Grove. The tract of land included 1,280 acres of most excellent land in a very good locality.

In October 1832 these lands were again reserved for Shabbona in a treaty which was made at Tippecanoe. In 1833 it was provided that Shabbona might sell his land if he felt so inclined, but for some reason in 1834 this privilege was taken from him. This left Shabbona's land as a regular reservation to be used by him until the government saw fit to take it from him. At any rate this is the way the matter culminated finally.

When the Indians were removed by the government to reservations west of the

Mississippi River the Indians of Shabbona's tribe outside of his relatives were made to go also. This was a hard blow for Shabbona. He loved his grove and the graves of his dead. He loved his people and they loved him. When they went he went with them to see that they were well located.

From 1835 until 1849 Shabbona did not make the grove his permanent home. He went to the west several times to visit his friends and in a few instances made extended visits, but he always returned to Illinois and to his reservation. The people were for the most part glad to have him return and visit among them. His genial disposition and the memory of what he had done for them made the people reserve a warm affection for Shabbona.

SALE OF THE OLD HOME

About 1845 Shabbona sold part of his land to the Gates brothers. He was not aware of the fact that the right to dispose of his reservation had been taken from him. The Gates brothers soon sold the land that they had acquired to settlers who bought small patches principally for the wood. Many of these settlers lived on the prairie and the wood was of much value to them.

It is said that during Shabbona's absence from the grove the surrounding settlers endeavored to show some interest in

would cut the best timber that he had and haul it to their homes.

In 1849 while Shabbona was away the commissioners of the general office decided that Shabbona had forfeited his right to his land by leaving it and that it should be sold.

The men who purchased the land from the Gates brothers were now in trouble. All of Shabbona's reservation was to be sold at Dixon. The government would sell it for \$1.25 an acre. It had been improved and was in some cases worth many times this amount. The people of Shabbona Grove selected two of their citizens, William Marks and Reuben Allen, to bid in the land. The others went along to see that these men had a chance to monopolize the bidding. There were 150 determined men in the party ready to use force to carry their point if necessary. There were a few others there ready to bid in the land but they had no chance to do so and the men from Shabbona Grove bought the land for \$1.25 an acre.

Now comes the sad part of our story. Shabbona had been in the West on an extended visit. He returned, expecting to receive the remainder of the payments due from the Gates brothers and to receive the rent due him from his own land that had been rented. This happened in 1849. It

was night when he came to his grove, tired from his long journey. With him were his people numbering something less than 25. They camped where they had been wont to camp, gathered a few poles for their tents and a few faggots for a fire. Imagine their surprise in the morning when the man, or better brute, who owned the land ordered him with curses to leave. The man was brutal in his treatment of Shabbona and his people. One writer in speaking of his treatments says, "Here he had lived for many years, and here were buried his beautiful twin boys, whose graves had been torn by the ruthless plowshare of his betrayers. Painting his face black, he fell prone o'er the little graves, calling upon the great spirit for strength and patience to endure his great affliction; living for a season on bitterness fed, he ate not, slept not, but constantly beat his breast, weeping and wailing until he grew wan and weary, then his powerful intellect wavered, tottered and fell, and he wandered forth without object or aim and was found lying upon the ground away up on Rock Creek, in Kendall County, in a distracted and starving condition and was brought back to life and reason by some good Samaritan."

This leaves Shabbona without a home. It is said that he never again went back to his grove. It is said that once a year the

squaws used to return and silently find their way to the place where their dead were buried and there a few days were spent in mourning, as it were for their departed. They had very little to do with the people who lived at the grove except to ask for a little water or food. When their season of mourning had passed they took their departure as silently as they had come and went back to their people. For seven years following his return to Illinois he spent his time visiting those of his tribe who had moved to the west and his friends in Illinois. It was during this time that the figure of Shabbona riding his pony became a familiar sight in northern Illinois especially in and about Chicago and to the south as far as and even beyond the Illinois River. He was a good rider, and usually rode in his old age, for we must remember that Shabbona was 75 years of age, when he was driven from his home in the grove. He did not care much for the roads of the whites but would take the trails that led across fields and through the timber if these were shorter. The settlers looked for him every Spring and in the Fall. If he did not pass they would feel that something had been missed.

SHABBONA'S LAST YEARS

Sometimes Shabbona traveled alone and again he traveled with a part, or all, of his family. His squaw always rode in a democrat wagon, sitting in the bottom of the box, filling it from side to side, for we must remember that she weighed in the neighborhood of 400 pounds. She was so fat that it was with difficulty that she could get up alone if she lay flat on her back. She would get into the wagon by mounting a chair and rolling over into the box. Her children or grandchildren usually went along and drove the ponies. Others followed on foot or rode their ponies. If Shabbona happened to reach the home of a white friend late at night he was always very careful lest he might disturb them. In the morning they would discover his presence by seeing his ponies grazing about, or by finding him rolled up in his blanket on the porch or in some other well protected place. Late in the fall of the year when the weather was cold Shabbona rolled up in his blanket and seemed unmindful of the weather as he slept.

Sometimes he would stop for several days at a place, visiting his white friends. His nephews and boys on these occasions

played games with the children of the white people and all seemed to forget their race differences for the time. There was a healthy rivalry in their sports which made their coming, from time to time, an event in the minds of the younger people. These Indian children were well behaved as they had received the best of home training in manners from the hands of Shabbona. Some of the frills of modern civilization had been omitted in this training but those principles which tend toward the development of strength of character had received attention.

Shabbona knew his place and was always careful never to do anything to impose upon the manners and customs of the whites. When he came to a farmhouse he was careful to use his own cup in drinking instead of using the one that he found at the well. As has been stated it was with difficulty that he could be induced to stay over night in a house and it was equally as difficult a matter to get him to sit down to eat at the table with the whites. Occasionally this happened with his more intimate friends. His squaw, we are told, had to wait until she had been waited upon by Shabbona, and orders had been given her by her lord to begin the process of eating. The

Indians were very fond of the cooking of the whites. It was not an uncommon thing for Coconoke to gather up all that was left on the table in her apron and store it away to be eaten on their journey later. The bread was very appetizing to them. The Indains liked the way that the whites cooked meats Frequently they would take a deer that had been killed to the whites to be cooked. The whites were glad to do this to please them and to receive a portion of the venison, or whatever it might be, for their trouble. The Indians were especially fond of the gravy that went with the meat as it was returned to them.

As Shabbona traveled about among the whites he took a great interest in what they were doing. He liked to watch them to see how they did things and in this way he learned to do many things as the whites did them. At his home in the Grove he had fences around part of his ground that was culivated to keep his ponies from destroying his crops. He had learned to culivate corn in very much the same way as the whites did at that time. He was always busy tinkering around at something. He was not a lazy Indian. What he did might have amounted to more than it did but for an Indian he did very well. The whites respect-

ed his industry. They liked to have him question them as to their ways of doing things and were glad, for the most part, to help him to acquire their ways.

Shabbona was quite a hand at doctoring. The whites often called upon him to help them with their sick. Snake bites and wounds that would not heal he knew how to cure. He went to the woods and on the prairie and there gathered his medicines. His own good health and the good health of his family was pretty good proof of his ability along this line.

People may wonder how Shabbona and his people managed to live after they were driven from their Grove. He was a good hunter and gained much in this way. In the Fall of the year he went to Chicago and his friends found out what he lacked in the way of clothing and food for the winter and among themselves supplied his wants. The people who knew him in many parts of Illinois gave him things as he visited them, but in spite of all this, Shabbona and his people were badly neglected by the whites, considering what he had done for them. After Shabbona's death those who remained for a number of years lived as paupers and beggars and at times their conditions were pitiable.

We are told that Shabbona was quite anxious that one of his daughters should marry a white man and it is said that he offered to give a goodly sum of money to any good respectable white man who would marry one of them. No one seemed to be inclined to take up his offer as the daughter he had in mind was built on the same plan that her mother was.

Shabbona was quite a public character and on all great occasions he was made much of. He was always the center of attraction at the fairs. He and his family were sure to attend. He appreciated very much the honor that was conferred upon him on such occasions. On the Fourth of July, 1857, there was a great celebration at Ottawa and Shabbona, his squaw, grandchildren, and children were there. They led the procession. In the evening there was given a great ball which Shabbona and his people attended. At this ball the belles of the town came out in their finest. There was a desire to know who of them excelled in beauty and grace. Shabbona was made judge and in the most critical manner examined each lady in the contest who passed before him for inspection. He was called upon to give his decision. Here he showed his sense of humor, his insight into human nature, and his appreciation of his wife.

Turning to Coconoke, his squaw, he brought his hand down upon her well-rounded shoulder and said, "Much, heap, big, prettiest squaw."

During the political campain of 1858 Shabbona was present on the platform with Lincoln, Douglas and Lovejoy at the famous debate between Lincoln and Douglas at Ottawa. At this time he was 83 years of age.

Shabbona traveled much. On one occasion he went to Washington and while there met Col. Johnson and the two talked over the battle of the Thames and the death of Tecumseh. When they parted Johnson gave Shabbona a gold ring that he wore during the remainder of his life.

On one occasion Shabbona, with a white man whose complexion was almost as dark as that of an Indian, was introduced to General Scott. General Scott took the white man to be Shabbona and in his pompous manner began to tell him how much he appreciated what he had done for the whites in Illinois during the Blaek Hawk war. Shabbona stood it as long as he could and then pointing to himself said to General Scott, "Me Shabbona."

The Indian in Shabbona displayed itself on one occasion at Morris, Illinois. At this point there was a toll bridge across the river. One of the citizens of Morris had

taken it upon himself to pay toll for Shabbona and his people whenever they wanted to cross the bridge. The toll keeper kept account of the times Shabbona crossed and interfered with his crossing in no way. On one occasion there was a new toll keeper who did not know of this arrangement. Shabbona appeared with his tribe and wanted to go over. The toll keeper would not let him cross without paying. Shabbona turned about and went to the man who was looking after his toll, secured a note from him, returned and was allowed to pass. He crossed to the end of the bridge, turned about, gave a whoop, and crossed and recrossed the bridge several times to show the toll keeper what he could do.

After Shabbona was driven from his Grove he had no home until 1857, when people who were interested in him raised a sum of money and purchased a home for him of 20 acres in Section 20, town 33, range 6, in the town of Norman, Grundy County, Illinois. Here they built a house for him and tried to provide for him. He lived here until his death July 27, 1859. He lived to be eighty-four years of age. He was burried in a lot in Evergreen cemetery near Morris, Illinois. This lot was donated by the cemetery association. His wife lies burried in the same lot. She died November 30, 1864. Her death

was pathetic. While crossing Mazon Creek in her democrat wagon with a little grandchild in her arms the wagon was upset and she was drowned, although the water was but a few inches deep. The child was found beneath her. It was also dead. There are also buried in the lot his favorite daughter Mary, and his grand-daughters, Mary Okonto, and Met-wetch, and his nieces, Chicksaw and Soco. All of Shabbona's people who remained, moved out west, after the death of Coconoke.

On Friday October 23, 1903, about fifty people gathered in Evergreen cemetery to witness the dedication of a monument to Shabbona. This consists of a huge boulder bearing the simple inscription, "Shabbona, 1775-1859" -- a fitting mark for the resting place of one of Illinois' noble men. Shabbona wanted nothing to mark his grave for he said that the life he lived should be his only monument. It was largely through the instrumentality of P. A. Stone of Morris, Illinois, and a body of workers that this monument was erected.

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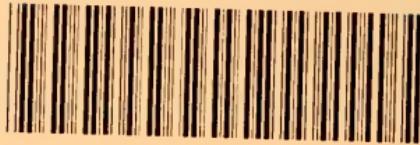
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